



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

Mountain
Plains
Region

1244 Speer Boulevard
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Reply to
Attn. of:

SFSP-122

APR 23 1991

Subject: Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) - Eligibility of Food Service Sites for the SFSP

To: STATE AGENCY DIRECTORS - Colorado ED, Iowa, Kansas, Montana OPI,
(Special Nutrition Programs) Nebraska ED, North Dakota, South Dakota,
Utah, and Wyoming DHSS

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify procedures for determining eligibility of food service sites for the SFSP. While this information is available from other sources (e.g., Regulations, policy instructions and handbooks), we felt that it would be useful to consolidate it in this memo in order to minimize the confusion which still exists with regard to the process of determining site eligibility.

General

There are two methods by which a sponsor may demonstrate that a site is located in an "...area in which poor economic conditions exist" ("open" site). In addition, there are alternate procedures for documenting the eligibility of other types of sites, such as, enrolled, residential and nonresidential camps, and sites serving the homeless, migrants and Native Americans.

Open Sites

An "open" site refers to a site that is open to all children in a given area and which bases its eligibility on aggregate data which define the need of the area. Each sponsor must annually announce in the media serving the area from which it draws its attendance the availability of free meals to any and all area children who come to the sites. "Open" sites must be prepared to feed any child that arrives at the site; they cannot feed only the children enrolled in a special Program located at the site. This does not, however, preclude site personnel from maintaining daily attendance lists to provide the best approximation of the number of children who will be present each day and thus the number of meals that must be ordered or prepared to serve them. Sponsors are reimbursed for Program meals served to all attending children.

Sponsors must demonstrate that their proposed "open" sites are located in geographical areas in which poor economic conditions exist (at least 50 percent of the local children are eligible for free or reduced price school meals). The first method is to use school data. Sponsors must determine which school(s) serves the area to be served by each site and contact the school(s) to obtain

the number of children who are eligible for free and reduced price National School Lunch or School Breakfast Program meals and the total enrollment of the school(s). The sponsors must then provide their State administering agency with the following information to document the eligibility of the area they intend to serve: the name(s) of the public or nonprofit private school(s) serving the children who reside within the area; the number (but not names) of all children eligible for free and reduced price meals who are enrolled in the school(s); and, the total number of children enrolled in the local school(s).

The administering agency will determine the eligibility of each proposed site located in the area based on this data submitted by the sponsor. Since the local school must certify the accuracy of the data, sponsors should ask the local school(s) to provide the necessary figures on school or district stationery, with the signature of an authorized school official.

The second method sponsors may use to document the area's need is by submitting census tract data, although we strongly recommend that sponsors use census tract data only if school information is nonexistent for a particular site. Census data may be as much as 10 years old, and an area as small as a census tract may have undergone substantial demographic change since the time of the most recent data. The census data used should cover as small a geographic area as possible to determine site eligibility of the area from which the sponsor intends to draw its attendance. Census data is frequently available from local government planning offices or public libraries.

Enrolled Sites

An "enrolled" site refers to a site which serves a specific group of children and the need of these children determines the eligibility of the site. Sponsors of "enrolled" sites are reimbursed only for the meals served to their enrolled attendees.

Sponsors of sites where meals are served only to an enrolled group of children must document their sites' eligibility based on the information contained on applications for free Program meals. Sponsors should provide these applications to all enrollees even though it is not necessary that such forms be obtained for all children enrolled. Using only the completed eligibility forms, a sponsor must be able to demonstrate that at least 50 percent of the enrolled children have been individually determined eligible for free or reduced price school meals.

Such sponsors must provide the State administering agency with: 1) a statement that they will use the **ELIGIBILITY FORM FOR CAMPS AND ENROLLED SITES**, or a sample of their individually developed form that they will use to collect family size and income data, or food stamp or AFDC case numbers from the children enrolled in each session, in order to determine their eligibility for Program meals; 2) the total number of children enrolled at the site; and, 3) the number of children enrolled at the site who are determined eligible for free and reduced price school meals based on the income eligibility guidelines or on their food stamp or AFDC case numbers.

Sponsors of enrolled sites are not required to submit the completed and approved eligibility forms to the administering agency. However, for each site that will be documented as eligible based on enrollment data, they must have on file at the site: 1) records of the total number of children enrolled at the site; and, 2) the actual approved eligibility form for each child who is counted as being eligible for free or reduced price school meals.

Camps

Sponsors of "residential camps" must obtain completed applications for free Program meals from, and make eligibility determinations for, each individual child for whom SFSP meal reimbursement is to be claimed. Meals served to children for whom there are no approved Program meal applications may not be claimed for reimbursement. There is no minimum percentage of eligible children required in order for a camp to qualify for participation in the SFSP.

"Nonresidential day camps" are similar to "enrolled" sites, except that, unlike enrolled sites, they need not meet the 50 percent criterion. Also, they must provide organized, cultural or recreational programs for enrolled children. Like residential camps, they may only claim reimbursement for meals served to children for whom they have individually approved applications for Program meals.

The term "camp" is a Program term and need not limit the type of participation by a given site. For example, a "day camp" operated by a city housing agency may qualify as an "enrolled" site, while the same agency might run a "recreation program" which qualifies and is approved as a "nonresidential camp", assuming each met the criteria discussed above.

Sponsors of residential and nonresidential camps must provide the administering agency with the number of children enrolled in each session at each camp site who have been determined eligible for SFSP meals. This information must be submitted before the time the sponsor's claim for reimbursement is submitted or at a time specified by the administering agency.

Administering agencies may also require camp sponsors to: 1) indicate that they will use the **ELIGIBILITY FORM FOR CAMPS AND ENROLLED SITES**; or 2) submit a sample of the locally developed form that they will use to collect family size and income data, or food stamp or AFDC case numbers from the children enrolled in each session, in order to determine their eligibility for Program meals.

Sponsors of camps are not required to submit their approved free eligibility forms to the administering agency. They must, however, have the originals of the approved forms for all eligible children available for review in their files.

National Youth Sports Program (NYSP) Sites

NYSPs operated by colleges and universities can participate as enrolled or nonresident camp programs. In either case, documentation of eligibility of the site must be based on approval of individual income eligibility applications. Sponsors receive reimbursement for up to two meals served only to children enrolled or participating in the NYSP. Refer to SFSP-86, April 18, 1990, for further information on participation of NYSPs.

Homeless Feeding Sites

Unlike regular sites and camp sites, homeless feeding sites may participate in the SFSP without reference to area eligibility and without taking applications for Program meals from participating children. Sponsors are reimbursed for Program meals served to all attending children regardless of whether the children are homeless or not. However, sponsors of homeless feeding sites shall not be reimbursed for meals served to adults.

These sites must document that: 1) their primary purpose is to provide shelter and one or more meal services per day to homeless families; and, 2) they are not residential child care institutions (RCCIs) as defined in the National School Lunch Program Regulations. RCCIs differ from homeless feeding sites in that they provide ongoing institutional care for children.

Alternative Procedures for Determining SFSP Eligibility

If sponsors are unable to document the need of their area or site(s) by school data, census tract data, or enrollment data, they have several other options: 1) Sponsors may submit photocopies of appropriate data from their State's volume of The 1980 U.S. Census Reports, General Social and Economic Characteristics (Bureau of the Census Publication #PC 80-1-C, Volumes 2-52, which can be obtained from public libraries) to document their area(s)' need; 2) sponsors offering Program sites located on Indian reservations may obtain and submit statistics on the population obtained from one of the 12 Bureau of Indian Affairs area offices to document the eligibility of those sites; and 3) sponsors may submit information obtained from a migrant organization to document the eligibility of sites serving children of migrant workers. The administering agency must confirm that the organization is a migrant organization, and the data provided must indicate that at least 50 percent of the children are eligible for free and reduced price meals.

Frequency of Need Documentation

Sponsors of camps and enrolled sites are required to obtain new documentation every year to support their eligibility to participate in the SFSP.

For all other sites, if a sponsor is serving the same sites that it served in the previous year, documentation from the previous year may be used to support the eligibility of the site. For such sites, sponsors shall only be required to obtain new documentation every other year.

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